DEUTSCHE AFRIKA-LINIEN
JOHN T. ESSBERGER

news

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DAL's new flagship "Kalahari" joins South Africa trade

Photo: Andreas Vallbracht

"DAL Kalahari" in the early hours of 23 January passing at slow speed by the historic pilot station Seemannshöft built in 1914 in the style of a church. Here the Elbe pilot disembarks and the Hamburg port pilot boards

Deutsche Afrika-Linien's new flagship, the "DAL Kalahari" (ex-"Mataquito", 6,600 TEU, 305 metres LOA), now in its traditional DAL colours, called at the port of Hamburg on 23 January 2021. It was her first and only visit. The "DAL Kalahari" was on her home voyage from East Asia, ending her charter voyage in the Baltic shortly before entering the DAL service. The "DAL Kalahari" then sailed to Bremerhaven, where she took a full load of containers bound for South Africa. She joined the fleet of seven similarly sized vessels employed in the South Africa Europe Container Service (SAECS) vessel sharing agreement. Fitted with 1,162 reefer plugs, the "DAL Kalahari", built in Taiwan in 2010, is ideally suited for the large reefer cargo volumes demanded by the South African fruit industry. Fortunately, the SAECS south- and northbound trade is back to pre-Covid-19 levels, enabling DAL to match their figures. Subsequently, the availability of berths in South African ports has become an issue again. Waiting times of up to one week or even longer are greatly impacting the SAECS schedule.

UAFL sold

On 14 January 2021, Deutsche Afrika-Linien sold their Indian Ocean service United Africa Feeder Line (UAFL). The entire company was handed over to a Luxembourg-based company whose portfolio fits very well to UAFL. DAL still provide services to UAFL in operations, IT and insurance. The container vessels "Ubena" and "Ulanga" currently charted out to UAFL are not affected by the sale and will therefore remain with the DAL/JTE Group of Companies. The sale is a further step in focusing primarily on the Group's core competences, the South Africa trade, where DAL see a profitable future.

Questions and answers to the Group's Covid-19 measures

To fight the Covid-19 pandemic, the DAL/JTE Group's crewing department, headed by André Trommler, is regularly updating the crews with safety measurements. But there remain questions that need to be answered. André Trommler says: "To all our seafarers I'd like to express our regrets about all the inconveniences, but testing and testing again plus health and hygiene rules is the only way we can minimise the risk of infections, as we want to avoid another backlog of suspended crew changes." Here are some frequently asked questions and the answers. See further important information on page 7 of this DAL/JTE News.

QUESTION: Is there a possibility that the rapid antigen test may show a wrong positive result?

ANSWER: Yes, this is the issue with these antigen tests in that they also react to actually harmless older variants of this coronavirus group. If someone has flu symptoms like a runny nose, this can result in a positive test, even if a recent PCR test was negative. Nevertheless, according to health

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The sad topic of Covid-19 has been dominating our lives for over a year now. In spring 2020, the first lockdown was put into effect and meanwhile we are in the thick of the third wave. One can only speculate when this pandemic will finally end. I'm afraid it will still take time before we no longer need to restrict our day-to-day lives. At least we have gained some important insights from the first year of the coronavirus crisis and have successfully adapted to them. As a Group, we meanwhile have made huge strides forward in economic terms. With the help of drastic restructuring measures, with bold investments and new partnerships, we managed to reverse the negative trend both in the South Africa liner and in the tanker trade. We made great progress in the organisation and digitalisation of our external processes. From an economic point of view, we are back on the right track.

However, there were also some setbacks. Sadly, we were unable to fully prevent infections on board our vessels. Yet we now know what the greatest dangers are: crew changes and contact with third parties such as port personnel and pilots. Nonetheless, it is good to see that our safety precautions are effective.

In view of the increasing number of virus mutations, the Covid-19 situation will only start to improve once most of the world has been vaccinated. We are very keen to see that all seafarers be categorised as essential workers and somewhat prioritised when it comes to being vaccinated. Luckily, the vaccines that have been approved are reliable and the distribution process is improving.

Let us stay optimistic but also vigilant. Our health is the most important thing we have.

Yours Heinrich von Rantzau

Compliments for the fine chemical tanker "Dutch Spirit" from Portugal

E&S tankers are a common sight in many European ports. Francisco de Jesus Fernandes of Lisbon Tanker Brokers is a trusted colleague and a keen photographer. He sent a collection of images to Captain Alex Buren of our chemical tanker "Dutch Spirit" taken at the port of Aveiro in Portugal and attached the following letter:

"Please accept this photo compilation I made especially for you as some sort of tribute dedicated to a great ship, the MT "Dutch Spirit" that I've known since she entered into the service about 25 years ago. She is in my humble opinion to be considered a Rolls Royce of the seas. Naturally, her ownership's management/manning/operations policy, as well as her officers and crew have successfully contributed to this amazing carrier. The Aveiro inward pilot was hugely impressed with the technology and capabilities of this ship at the age of 25 years. The word has spread, very good for you! I just couldn't miss the opportunity to register her presence with my photos. My sincere thanks to the owner, the charterer, to the pilots, to the port administration and to the agents."

Chemical tanker "Dutch Spirit" with approaching Aveiro pilot seen through the eyes of photographer Francisco de Jesus Fernandes

Francisco de Jesus Fernandes also submitted an article on the "Dutch Spirit" written by him and just published in social media. Under the headline "The max 20-year-old vessel rule imposed by several charterers", he says: "My understanding is that by making it a flat rule one risks being unfair and not necessarily taking the best option. This could lead us to an extensive debate, but are shipping professionals keen to undergo such a sensitive discussion? Nevertheless, something positive could eventually arise, i.e. getting those charterers to look at ships above 20 years of age with more dedicated attention and thorough evaluation.

We have recently seen MT 'Dutch Spirit' calling at Aveiro to perform a voyage transporting chemicals to Antwerp. This unit, at an approximate age of 25, started to strongly impress the local pilots upon her inward passage. She then performed the loading operations extremely well, giving absolutely no reason for complaint. By the time she sailed I heard a comment saying, 'We should have more vessels like this one here." The sentence has a broad meaning, especially to the sceptical charterers, whose shipping expertise could be better applied in their day-to-day routine work. The industry and the various market sectors could benefit if changes took place." The "Dutch Spirit" (4,442 dwt) was built in 1996 by Verolme Shipyard, Heusden.

Questions and answers to the Group's Covid-19 measures

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authorities, any positive result must be considered as true. The affected person must be kept in quarantine until a further PCR test has verified the earlier result. Therefore, if the rapid antigen test is positive, a PCR test must be arranged asap. We then have to check several options together with you, SSHEQ and port agents depending on the time and location. We may still have the chance to bring the seafarer ashore for a PCR test, then quarantine until the test result is known and then to embark again in the next port. Or, if the vessel is at sea (for example when the second test is done) the seafarer is quarantined in the ship's hospital until the next port for a PCR test.

QUESTION: Are crew changes in UK permitted?

ANSWER: It is possible, with special precautions and documents to be prepared, but at present not advisable as this is a high-risk area. It is also difficult to book flights as the number of connections is very limited.

QUESTION: How should visitors such as external suppliers and technicians be treated, also if they stay on board for a few days?

ANSWER: Those travelling with the ship need to be treated like newly joining crew members as they are then part of the vessel's complement. Refer to the Safety Circular sent by SSHEQ on 23 February.

QUESTION: What pre-embarkation test is required, PCR or rapid antigen test?

ANSWER: At the end of last year we said that preferably a Covid PCR test should be done prior to departure, but if not available in some seafarer's location then a rapid antigen test on the way to the airport would also be acceptable. However, meanwhile (and we also noted that from all the feedback) PCR tests are available in all locations and the seafarers found out where they can get them in time. Therefore, as of now we always require a PCR test. If in the few places where an antigen rapid test is still the only test available, then please inform the crew operator or manning agency to seek approval of this. Since these rapid tests are more reliable now, we would normally approve.

QUESTION: Is shore leave permitted?

ANSWER: We are well aware that shore leave is an important part for the crew's welfare and wellbeing. However, in the present situation we advise all masters not to permit shore leave unless in urgent unavoidable cases such as doctor visits. On board, the crew is well isolated and relatively safe, but not ashore where an imminent infection risk does exist.

QUESTION: Who should test them using the rapid antigen test delivered by the company – the Captain himself or can he delegate it to somebody?

ANSWER: It can be done by anyone certified to provide medical care on board (Master, Chief Officer, Deck Officers).

QUESTION: Where should they be tested? Already on board but before they go to the accommodation area or should someone from the vessel go ashore and test them at the terminal before they even come on board?

ANSWER: It can be done on board in a room not occupied by any other crew members, for example the hospital or a spare cabin (even the bridge during a port stay, if no other room is available), and they must proceed there directly without contact to other crew members, preferably using the outside stairs.

QUESTION: Where should they wait for the test results?

ANSWER: In the same room where they were tested. It takes just half an hour.

QUESTION: What is the procedure if the test result is positive?

ANSWER: The person must be isolated in the room where they were tested, without contact to anyone. Then call the designated person/SSHEQ. Keep the disembarking crew on board and discharge the person who tested positive into a quarantine place ashore arranged by the agents, if this is permitted. In any case, the vessel must not depart with the positive case on board. Anything further after consultation with SSHEQ depends on the local situation. We may have to report the case to the authorities and delay departure.

Photo: Wolfhard Scheer

The remains of the day, soon to vanish. In March 2020, nothing was left of the historic three-master "Seute Deern" but the bare hull on a bed of gravel

Last farewell to John T. Essberger's sweet girl

After 102 years, the scrapping of the barque "Seute Deern" marks the end of a historic vessel

In the summer of 2020, the "Seute Deern" (Sweet Girl) made her last voyage from her berth in the museum port of Bremerhaven to the city's Alter Hafen (Old Port) on the Weser. Here, the wooden sailing ship, half of its interior burnt out and its leaking hull flooded metre-high with water, was placed on a bed of gravel. The three masts have meanwhile disappeared and its toxic coat of paint has been disposed of as hazardous waste. Soon nothing will be left of the "Seute Deern".

What makes the ship so special? Built in 1919 in Gulfport/Mississippi as a four-masted gaff-rigged schooner, the ship was christened "Elisabeth Bandi". The hull was made of fresh Florida pine, which was not a good choice. It soon became evident that the wood was too soft, it became distorted, and without a copper plated bottom it was prone to shipworm infestation in tropical waters. The "Bandi" leaked like a sieve since the day she was built and had to be overhauled after each voyage.

Sail training ship "Seute Deern" in her better days, cruising the Eastern Baltic under full sails in the late 1930s

The sailing ship was used mainly for timber shipments, initially under the US flag and as of 1931 under the Finnish flag. In the cold and low-salt water of the Baltic Sea, shipworms cannot survive, which was highly beneficial for the ship's planks.

In 1938, when the age of cargo-carrying sailing ships was long over, tanker owner John T. Essberger (1886-1959) bought the schooner for 26,500 Reichsmark. Shipyard Blohm + Voss in Hamburg enlarged the "Elisabeth Bandi" from 61 metres to 75 metres and fitted the vessel with three masts of steel to convert it to a barque (1,418 m² sail area), after which the ship was renamed "Seute Deern". The bow now featured the carving of a sweet girl as a figurehead and a shield of the company logo with its blue "E". The white-and-blue company flag flew from the topmast.

John T. Essberger, himself a passionate yachtsman, knew that the seamanship and character of youngsters could be formed on sailing ships. The "Seute Deern" was ideal for on-board training of future seafarers for his company.

A little more than six months later, World War II broke out and the "Seute Deern" was blocked from sailing the seven seas. During the war, the "Seute Deern" still sailed but was confined to the Baltic Sea. Essberger loved this ship and visited it frequently.

John T. Essberger (left) on deck of his "Seute Deern". He was a keen yachtsman. On this day he had sailed a dinghy – and capsized. Soaking wet he returned on board and had taken off his jacket and shoes to dry

Shortly after the war ended, an Essberger fleet no longer existed, the "Seute Deern" was converted to a hotel ship and moved to the port of Hamburg. Since the war-torn city lay in ruins and there were no hotels, the ship was well frequented and accommodated quite a few VIP guests.

In 1954, John T. Essberger sold his floating hotel to Dutch owners. Several other owners followed, who all had problems to prevent the hull from disintegrating. The "Seute Deern's" odyssey ended in 1972 in Bremerhaven, where she became the highlight of the German Maritime Museum's fleet. By then the hull was leaking so badly that 150 cubic metres of water had to be pumped out of the bilge each day. In February 2019, the ship caught fire and in November it sank to the ground in the port: a constructive total loss, with the Essberger flag still flying from her mast. For the last year, they have been dismantling the "Seute Deern", and by the time the next DAL/JTE News comes out, there will be nothing left of Essberger's sweet girl.

Crossing the North Atlantic in winter: voyage of the "Caroline Essberger" to Canada and back

By trainee Don Buren

In the night of 6 to 7 February 2020, Captain Geert Wijnands and his crew set sail with the "Caroline Essberger" on a voyage from Rotterdam to Bécancour, Canada, carrying 4000 tons of paraffin. The "Caroline Essberger" (8,792 dwt) is an ice-going product/chemical tanker built in 2009.

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean brought several adjustments for the crew. During the great circle voyage the time zone changed six times to UTC -5, the IALA Maritime Buoyage system went from A to B, and Canadian ice charts promised the class 1A vessel increasing ice thickness from Cabot Straight via the Gulf of St Lawrence all the way to Bécancour up the St Lawrence River.

While sailing out of Dover Strait, the last visual landscape in over a week would be Ireland before coming closer to New Foundland, Canada. With varying Easterly 7 to 8 Beaufort and 5- to-6-metre waves in a favourable direction, the Atlantic crossing started off quite comfortable and gave time to prepare the vessel for challenging cold temperatures and icing situations. The voyage passed and the weather conditions changed during the last days of the crossing. Here the waves up to 8 metres caused more motion to the vessel, so soup was very hard to keep inside of the bowl during lunchtime.

Once inside Canadian waters the wind and waves in the Gulf of St Lawrence made the last days even more challenging and the temperature at this point already passed minus 10 degrees Celsius. In this part of Canada there are whale restrictions with a speed limit of 10 knots maximum, but no whale was spotted in this time of year.

Two pilots were picked up when sailing on to the St Lawrence River and from here the ice thickness started to grow and mountains full of snow and ice on both sides rose from the waterside while the sun shone nicely above them. Two new pilots boarded in Quebec, a characteristic big town with a lot of industry and old buildings. Shortly hereafter, night fell and a couple more hours were left on the meanders of the St Lawrence River. On 19 February, after 18 hours under pilotage and two days of de-icing, Captain Wijnands manoeuvred the vessel alongside the jetty where the water had just been cleared of ice by a local ice breaker.

During operations in Bécancour, Captain Geert Wijnands virtually shook hands with his reliever, Captain Bas van Groenestijn and wished him and his crew a safe voyage back to Algeciras, Spain.

Minus 10 degrees Celsius: "Caroline Essberger" reaches the St Lawrence River and the icing increases

The skyline of Quebec City is dominated by the Chateau Frontenac

Westward ho! The chemical tanker on ice course

Chilly and grey and land in sight. The coast of the Canadian province of Quebec as seen from the bridge of the "Caroline Essberger"

Quebec Bridge from 1919, 987 m long, 45 m headroom

Sunset on the North Atlantic, "Caroline Essberger" rolling home

By Captain van Groenestijn

As I am writing my report, we are still underway to Algeciras with two days to go. After the flight from Schiphol to Montreal and one night in a hotel I joined the "Caroline Essberger" on 20 February. We were still discharging then. After discharge we could stay alongside for tank cleaning and then we loaded our cargo of 7,000 mt alkyl benzene at same berth. On the 22nd the cargo was loaded and so we departed Bécancour, hopefully not for the last time. Pilotage on our way out only took 13 hours because of the favourable current.

Still a lot of drift ice was encountered the next two days, but this posed no big problems. As we entered the open sea of the Atlantic the great circle voyage began. We adjusted our course whenever needed to get favourable winds and seas. This was monitored and calculated with the help of the weather program SPOS. We encountered some heavy winds up to 8 Beaufort and waves up to 7 metres, most of the time from our stern helping to keep up our average speed.

For me this was the first Atlantic crossing and I must say I felt quite small in the middle of the ocean. After discharging in Algeciras/Spain we were to have another challenge for our fine lady: We are bound for Lavera/France to load a full cargo of caustic soda, then another 15-day trip to Kemi, Finland, will follow.

These beautiful voyages remind me why I went to sea in the first place.

In Canadian waters. This kind of winter weather scenery is not unfamiliar to the crew, looks just like the Baltic at this time of year

"A spontaneous deal"

DAL/JTE NEWS: Home of the E&S tanker fleet is the European coastal waters. Now we suddenly see an E&S tanker crossing the North Atlantic in winter.

VANG: This was not for the first time for an Essberger chemical tanker to cross the Atlantic. When we get the right deal, we take the chance.

DAL/JTE NEWS: How did you get this chance?

VANG: We concluded this deal spontaneously. The ship that was supposed to do this voyage was suddenly unavailable. But the factory in Canada was in urgent need of the product and our major client CEPSA had no choice but to search the market for a possible vessel that could bring the feedstock to the factory promptly. We swiftly changed our program in order to free up the "Caroline Essberger" for other cargoes so she could load in Rotterdam the next day. Obviously due to the swift efforts of all departments working closely together Operations, Crewing, Vetting, Chartering was able to fix an outstanding freight and good employment for about 35 days. It was a great performance of the vessel both to and from Canada.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Will we see more Atlantic crossings in the future?

So says Christian Vang, Commercial Manager (Spot) of E&S Tankers

VANG: I can't promise a regular E&S transatlantic express service, but we are always ready to extend our traditional trading area if something interesting comes up.

Whereabouts

April 2021

Ship name	Master	First Mate	Chief Engineer
Agnes Essberger	Andrey Grzhibovskiy	Viacheslav Leonov	Piotr Popiel
Alcedo	Cornelis Lodder	Pieter Labee	Oebele Kooistra
Amalie Essberger	Piotr Bes	Marcin Madry	Adam Szwajka
Anneliese Essberger	Peter Troost	Kokou Gbegan	Pieter Pasterkamp
Annette Essberger	Arkadiusz Duczynski	Quirino II Agot	Artur Krupa
Ardea	Sander De Bos	Chris De Boer	Serge Van Der Pol
Birthe Essberger	Andrei Malenkov	Wojciech Nowak	Ruslans Lesciks
Caroline Essberger	Arnoldus Van Groenestijn	Willem Schot	Teunis Oskam
Charlotte Essberger	Boguslaw Gajdowski	Roman Rybin	Artur Kazimierz Gzella
Christian Essberger	Robert Szmaj	Mateusz Borysewicz	Oleksandr Samusenko
Dal Kalahari	Janusz Urbanski	Joanna Koczyk	Piotr Turski
Dutch Aquamarine	Adolph Kamphuis	Brian Desterre Roberts	Jan Sonneveld
Dutch Emerald	Hubertus Meulenberg	Roger Oenema	Gerlof Tijink
Dutch Faith	Edgar Roelofsen	Onno Smit	Roel Tichelaar
Dutch Spirit	Alex Buren	Els Impens	Marinus Kroon
Ellen Essberger	Adam Krzyzykowski	Adrian Kuzmicz	Dmitry Shcherbov
Elsa Essberger	Lukasz Antczak	Tomasz Kozyra	Aleksey Plyasukhin
Georg Essberger	Jose Teixeira	Adrian Mariak	Tomasz Kozlowski
Gisela Essberger	Dariusz Swierkosz	Maksim Naumcik	Pavel Semyonov
Helga Essberger	Waldemar Literski	Daniel Szarzynski	Pavel Kuzma
Johann Essberger	Deniss Tatarinovs	Juris Jurionas	Oleg Byts
John Augustus Essberger	Jaroslaw Spors	Valentin Eriskin	Valeriy Bashkurov
Liesel Essberger	Boguslaw Olbrys	Marcin Zietek	Piotr Kret
Lisa Essberger	Leonardus Kanters	Dominik Kazior	Dionysius Jannink
Maersk Launceston	Pavlo Klyuyev	Vladimir Lobov	Pavlo Polishchuk
Nordic Saga	Ingi Hansen	Antonio Jr. Ocampo	Fredrik Hollmén
Patricia Essberger	Grzegorz Kakol	Szczepan Pachula	Leonid Volkov
Philipp Essberger	Tomasz Rembisz	Jakub Nadaj	Vitor Belo
Theodor Essberger	Bartosz Selau	Pawel Bula	Andrzej Sullik
Ubena	Konstantin Kveselevich	Pawel Wodzislawski	Yevgeny Arsenyuk
Ulanga	Ioan-Cristian Cioban	Rafel Nones	Costica Tuca
Ursula Essberger	Paul Leonard De Ridder	Andre Steenbergen	Sipke Steenbergen
Wilhelmine Essberger	Marco Boshuijzen	Jeroen Ruitenschild	Marten Bosma

Aus der Reederei-Familie

Besondere Geburtstage

85 Jahre

Hans Hinrich Mewes, 08.02.1936
Klaus Jochens, 02.03.1936
Jürgen Kurth, 24.03.1936
Georg Stichel, 25.03.1936

80 Jahre

Klaus Dieter Tittel, 03.04.1941

70 Jahre

Janusz Ladkowski, 24.04.1951

65 Jahre

Günter Rolf, 01.03.1956
Ingo Witte, 29.04.1956

60 Jahre

Ignacio Gremiano Mendez, *AB*, 01.02.1961
Capt. Grzegorz Klepacki, 27.02.1961
Vitor Manuel Belo, *C/E*, 08.03.1961
Athos Buchheister, *IT*, 10.03.1961
Mihai Tatarca, *Elec.*, 25.03.1961
Oleg Durach, *Elec.*, 26.03.1961

50 Jahre

Jörn Weidner, *Liner Agency Bremen*, 04.03.1971
Karsten Müsse, *Driver*, 23.03.1971
Roman Bedenko, *2/E*, 17.04.1971
Gloman Lancara Panaligan, *AB*, 26.04.1971
Piotr Popiel, *C/E*, 27.04.1971

Neue Mitarbeiter an Land

David Jones, *Ship Management*
Johannes Kindermann, *E&S Tankers*
Leif Nechwatal, *E&S Tankers*
Dr. Arif Reschke, *Controlling*
Jonas Rückert, *E&S Tankers*
Ernest Weiss, *Ops Liner Services*

Neuer Auszubildender an Land

Peter Willer, *John T. Essberger*

Ausgelernte Auszubildende an Land

Lars Deemering
Jonas Rückert, Übernahme, *E&S Tankers*

Wir gratulieren zur Geburt eines Kindes

Maren Radinsky, Tochter Helene, Januar 2021
Elena Thomson, Tochter Luzie Emilia, März 2021

Wir gedenken

Casimir Poté, Fahrer Heinrich von Rantzau, Dezember 2020

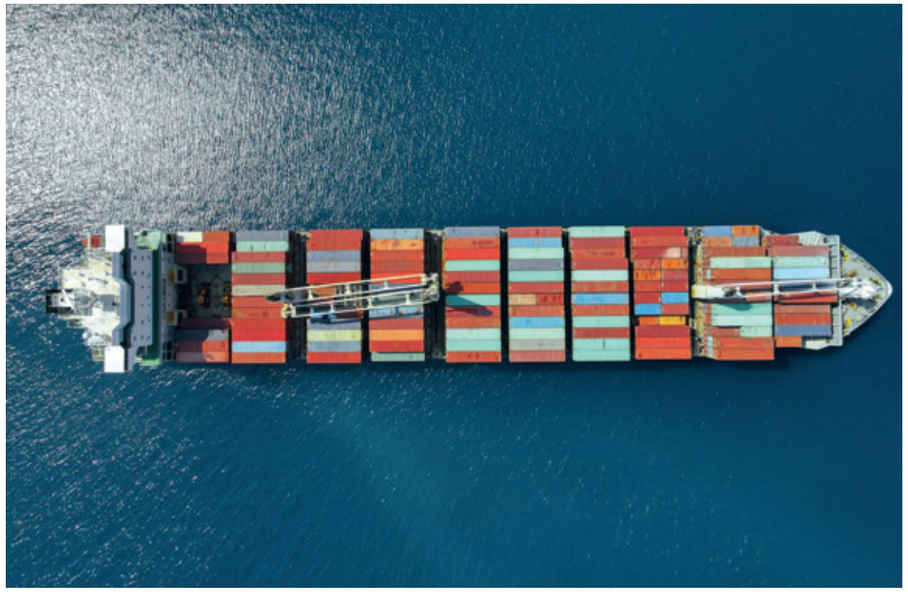
Kapitän Hans Stapelfeldt, Pensionär DAL, Januar 2021

Early April update for our crews on the prospects of vaccination against Covid-19

André Trommler, Head of Essberger Crewing Services, has news for our crews. Covid-19 has not been beaten yet

Of course, nothing feasible yet due to the limited availability of vaccines, but we are following up to be there for you at the right moment.

Still there is no vaccine available in any of the seafarers' home countries except Russia, from where in mid-March the first of our vaccinated seafarers departed. In the next update I will also refer to the question if or if not to still apply our test strategy also to vaccinated crew members.



Every ship is an island. But Covid-19 poses a risk all over the world, even far out on the ocean. MV "Ubena" from a bird's-eye view

Seafarers are not very high on the priority list

The short answer is YES, but I will explain the reasons then in more detail. So far in none of the other countries, except Singapore, seafarers are in the first few positions on the priority lists, and as the governments are in control of the purchase and distribution of vaccines, it is not yet available on the market.

Some glimpse of prospecting news came from the Philippines, where the government wanted to implement a vaccination plan as early as March, and seafarers are said to be in 10th place. In addition, our manning agency PTC/TOS is negotiating with governmental institutions and the medical industry the purchase of vaccines as soon as they become available on the free market. We were already asked how many doses we require so they can be added to a bulk order as soon as possible.

André Trommler, Head of Essberger Crewing Services (ECS)

We as well as our other manning agencies are also trying to obtain information when and where to buy vaccines. Here from the office, we have our ears to the ground at several organisations, for example the Dutch Shipowner Association, Intertanko and the Global Maritime Forum. We also signed the "Neptune Declaration of the Global Maritime Forum on Wellbeing of Seafarers and Crew Change" together with hundreds of other shipping companies (https://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/neptune-declaration/). We are liaising with our company-appointed doctor's office in Hamburg, who already received various enquiries from other shipowners as to where they can get vaccines. Several bigger industrial companies based in Hamburg have raised their intention to get vaccines on the market as soon as possible and let their company doctors vaccinate all their employees, so we are witnessing growing pressure on the government to allow the private purchase of vaccines once more vaccine brands are approved for a better production output. This will happen in other countries, too.

In April, I will attend an online session of a Maritime Forum for Maritime Security where these questions will be discussed and, as it happens, also a medical service known to us will participate, who is also looking around for vaccines for shipowners.

Again I'd like to express our regrets about all the inconveniences, but testing again and again plus health and hygiene rules are all we can do to at least minimise the risk of infections, as we want to avoid another backlog of suspended crew changes.

Latest news: Poland is now continuing to vaccinate according to age, so their priority list is very clear and does not give preference to a certain group of professions. At present they continue with those persons born in 1961, so that soon we will have the first seafarers vaccinated. Still, it is slow due to the non-availability of vaccines. Every vaccinated seafarer means a little less risk, but the more seafarers vaccinated, the more risk will be eliminated. We have many Polish seafarers and also in Poland the infection numbers are rising. These vaccinations will be a significant risk mitigation for all our crews on board.

For more information on the **DAL/JTE Group** please contact Svante Domizlaff, tel: +49 40 38016-611, email: svante.domizlaff@rantzau.de or the German head office
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DAL Agency Durban, Sharaf House, 1st Floor La Lucia Ridge Office Estate, Umhlanga/Durban 4051, RSA, tel: +27 31 5829400, fax: +27 31 5829401 or
Essberger & Stolt Tankers Palmaille 45, 22767 Hamburg, tel: +49 40 38016-0, email: chartering@es-tankers.com

"Our digital roadmap is ready"

Manager Processes and Digital Transformation Dr Andreas Freier about the huge challenges of digitalisation and how to use new software methods to create values for our customers and for us across all departments

His name is Andreas Freier. He has been working for our Group of Companies since July 2020 and fills an important position that didn't exist in this form before: Manager Processes and Digital Transformation. Dr Freier has the relevant experience and qualifications for the job.

He was born in the town of Brandenburg where he attended secondary school and, after gaining his university entrance qualifications and doing his military service, he studied Computing with Logistics at the University of Magdeburg. He followed his professor to Bielefeld and worked in research and as a lecturer while completing his PhD.

The next three years Dr Freier worked in software development for Biotronik, the European market leader for pacemakers and implantable defibrillators, before joining shipowner Hapag-Lloyd in Hamburg as an IT analyst in 2008, where he optimised their complex logistics network that today has 130 services and 800 vessels in an association of partners.

Hapag-Lloyd wanted to modernise their internal freight information system (FIS), a world-leading complete IT solution for ocean carriers that previously only focused on transactional applications, such as mass bookings and transport scheduling. Back then there were very few analytical tools to provide any form of in-built intelligence, and engineers who could create and successfully implement such solutions themselves were few and far between.

In the next 12 years, Dr Freier and his IT team in cooperation with the relevant departments accomplished a lot. Particularly worth mentioning are the central systems for empty-container repositioning "Deficit Action Planning" (DAP), the network management tool "Maritime Network Planning" (MONET), and the network monitoring process "Operational Vessel Monitoring and Network Insights" (OMNI): more than one million lines of source code that ensure Hapag-Lloyd's technological advantage.

Dr Freier follows his philosophy of providing users with interactive program interfaces that are as easy to use and as attractive as possible. At the same time, artificial intelligence is working in the background and automatically provides its users with optimal decisions. Combining all this requires a well-versed engineer.

In order to apply his experience more broadly, Dr Freier first built up a small team and gradually expanded it to eventually create a competence centre for business analytics together with several internal task forces, not to mention nearshoring in Minsk and external contractors. He is now applying his experience and innovative expertise at DAL/JTE. It is a great advantage that Dr Freier knows IT as well as logistics and thereby speaks both "languages". He is a Catholic and a family man, who spends his free time freestyle wrestling and canoe racing and has both feet firmly on the ground.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Dr Freier, you have been working here for nine months. What have you done so far and what do you see as your most important task?

FREIER: At first, I familiarised myself with all the departments within the company and did a lot of listening. Although we are a relatively small company, we have many, very different divisions. That's what makes it so interesting. Considerable work was already done in the past but the huge challenges that digitalisation poses means that the staff will always have to keep adapting. Learning to use new software and methods makes it possible to create new values for our customers and for us across all the departments, especially in the commercial areas of liner and tanker shipping. My focus is currently on the way our work processes are organised, which is the basis for digital transformation. Here there is still a lot of groundwork to be done irrespective of the coronavirus pandemic.

DAL/JTE NEWS: You have drawn up preliminary plans for a digital strategy.

FREIER: Yes, the roadmap is ready, and its implementation has begun as part of the Performance Programme. Our digital strategy defines five areas we plan to address with innovations, how we approach digital transformation, and which key aspects and priorities we emphasise to achieve success. First: commercial success through digital customer products, digital marketing, digital sales and revenue management. Second: administration, digital human resources and eLearning. Third: steering by digital controlling and organisation. Fourth: operational excellence, digital supply chain, container & vessel tracking. Fifth: technology by digital infrastructure, digital security and data analytics. These five areas will improve our commercial success and ensure our progress in digital innovation. To sum up: digital transformation yields new methods, technology and cultural spirit across all focus areas and value streams. They need to be aligned with our corporate goals and values. All in all, our digital strategy roadmap currently contains 30 substreams that we are working on and where we are managing the change in innovation projects and the resulting digital products.

Digital pilot Dr Andreas Freier: "Only with the help of modern methods and systems will we be able to manage the workload"

DAL/JTE NEWS: Confucius says: The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. What are your first stones?

FREIER: I supported our IT department with the implementation of the collaboration software Microsoft 365. This is a fundamental pillar of our digital platform, where all our documents are securely saved in the cloud and accessible worldwide. In the third quarter of 2020, we went live for selected user groups at E&S Tankers, DAL and in the administration. We have set up more than 180 SharePoint sites, and their use by the teams is growing by 30% each month. We have created a Lego-like concept that we are soon going to roll out for all the teams in our Group of Companies. Of course, we will do this via our new Learn Management system, another important pillar. No digital transformation without eLearning. The continued development of our web platform was important, because we can use it to offer our services to customers more powerfully and in digital form, for example through web apps and interfaces (API). That leaves more time for personal customer care.

DAL/JTE NEWS: It sounds like our staff will then have a considerable amount of learning.

FREIER: That might apply to a few members of staff, but my impression is that most of them are very interested and that there is a team spirit. By the way, I learn something new every day, too. If you don't go forward, you go backward. I think it's important to understand that these new tools can simplify tasks and make them more manageable. The world of logistics is becoming more complex, and many things are now almost impossible to plan by hand or by just using Excel. In future, only with the help of modern methods and systems will we be able to manage the workload.